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WANG YANG MING, A CHINESE IDEALIST.¹

TO the philosophic basis of her civilization, more than to any other single factor, is due the survival of China's social institutions and the preservation of her national integrity. The influence of Confucius and Mencius upon Chinese life and thought has been more penetrating and profound than the impress of Greek philosophy upon European life and culture. As in the development of philosophic thought in India interpretation always harks back to the Rig Veda for its authority, so for the philosophic expositions of Chinese philosophers the criterion of orthodoxy is in accord with the Four Books and the Five Classics. This, however, does not exclude the possibility of spirited discussion with reference to the precise connotation of certain classic expressions and the subsequent formation of systems varying as widely as realism and idealism. The object of this essay is to familiarize the reader with one of these systems, the most important one that has appeared in China within the modern period,—that of the philosopher Wang Yang Ming.

The date of Wang Yang Ming's life is approximately 1472-1528. As compared with contemporary European history, he lived in the period of the great maritime discoveries and at the beginning of the Reformation. He was fearlessly propounding his view in China shortly before

¹ Extracts from a paper read before the Royal Asiatic Society, Shanghai, published in this form with permission of the Council. It constitutes a part of the result of two years' research in the Chinese text of the philosophy and letters of Wang Yang Ming.

Giordano Bruno, after a life of restless wandering in search of truth, suffered martyrdom for his philosophic exposition of the universe, and about a century previous to Hobbes, Descartes and Spinoza. The spirit which actuated him was closely akin to that of the Reformation. Thoroughly dissatisfied with what seemed to him useless striving for form and style in literary composition and with the vain discussions of scholars, who ignored the great moral, religious and political issues of his day and gave an incorrect interpretation of the fundamental principles of human life and the universe, he strove to bring the leaders of his people back to the original path of duty outlined in the Four Books and the Five Classics.

At the age of thirty-seven, while serving as a disgraced official, because of the enmity of the eunuch Liu Tsing, in the government despatch service in the province of Kwei-chow, he received his great enlightenment. His biographer describes Lungch'ang where he was stationed as a resort of venomous snakes and poisonous worms, inhabited by babbling barbarians with whom he could not converse. The situation was extremely critical. He feared that at any moment a decree from the capital might order his death. Moreover, his followers all fell ill. Nothing daunted, he chopped wood himself, carried water, and made soft-boiled rice for them, cheering them with songs and stories of home. Also, in view of his own precarious position, he had a sarcophagus made. In the midst of all these difficulties, the chief subject of his meditation was, "What additional methods would a sage adopt under similar circumstances?" At midnight while on his couch, he suddenly realized what the sage meant by "investigating things for the sake of extending knowledge to the utmost." Overjoyed, he unconsciously called out and, getting up, paced the room. "I was wrong," he said, "in looking for fundamental principles in things and affairs. My nature is

sufficient." From that time he was a faithful defender of idealism against the realism of the philosopher Chu, whose commentaries on the classics were considered as an authority at that time.

The philosophy of Wang Yang Ming, the teacher of Yang Ming grotto, is to-day held in high esteem by the Japanese as an ideal statement of the fundamental principles of life and the universe, and has been a profound factor in their moral development during the last hundred years. In China a tide of rising popularity is rapidly bringing it out of obscurity into the forefront. Not as a closet-philosopher but as a military hero, patriot, and reformer-statesman, his ideal was to bring the scholars of his day back to the true learning of the sages. Educated men of his day spent their time in perfecting literary style, their one ambition being success in examinations and a high literary degree, that thereby they might gain emolument and fame; but he considered such procedure ethically unsound. For him the greatest thing was not study to become a *Chinshih*, but study to become a sage.² His was an attitude of mind that dwelt upon great moral values, and found fullness of life and moral integrity of greater worth than fame and gain. One day while feasting with several of his disciples, he took occasion to lay bare the futility of his day. "We eat and drink," he said, "only in order to nourish the body. The food which has been eaten must be digested. If it collects in the stomach it causes dyspepsia, and how can it then become muscle? Later scholars study extensively and know much, but what they read and know remains undigested. They all have dyspepsia."³

² *Chinshih* under the old system of literary examinations was a degree corresponding approximately to the European "Doctor of Philosophy." Once attained, honor, influence and position were assured.

³ The Philosophy of Wang Yang Ming, Book 2, *Yü Lu*, p. 6. All references to the Philosophy of Wang Yang Ming in this paper are to the Chinese

Confusion and display seemed to him to be prominently characteristic of contemporary learning. Failing to function properly in the life process, it wrought havoc wherever it prevailed. He compared the students of his day to a theatre where a hundred different acts are presented. "The players cheer, jest, hop and skip. They emulate one another in cleverness and ingenuity. They laugh in the play and strive for the palm of beauty. On all sides they emulate one another. The people look toward the front and gaze toward the rear, but cannot see it all. Their ears and their eyes are confused; their mental and physical energy is disturbed. Day and night they spend in amusement. They are steeped in it and rest in it as though they were insane. They do not even know what has become of their family property. Under the influence of such scholars, princes and kings are confused and confounded and all their lives devote themselves to vain, useless literary style. They do not know what they say. The learning of the sages is daily left more in the distance and becomes more obscured, while practices are directed toward acquiring honor and gain. The farther they go the more they fall into error. Though some of them have been deceived by Buddhism and Taoism, yet even the sayings of Gautama and Lao Tze are unable to influence permanently the mind that is devoted to honor and gain."⁴

In order to appreciate Wang Yang Ming's point of view, it is necessary to keep this steadily in mind, for his interest was that of a reformer and thus largely ethical. He attempted to place learning and conduct upon a firm basis. The glamour of a superficial philosophic foundation had no fascination for a man of his practical bent of mind. He sought bed-rock; he wished to find the very source of life and the universe. After having sought vainly in Bud-
edition of his work,—the only one available. While they are not of general interest, they will serve to locate the references for such as read Chinese.

⁴ The Philosophy of Wang Yang Ming, Book 3, p. 71.

dhism and Taoism for relief; after having tried the philosopher Chu's instructions to search for principles in external things, but without success; at last in the middle of the night while among the barbarians in far Kwei Chow he came to a state of realization. It was as though the fog had suddenly cleared away. "My nature is sufficient," he said. Upon this foundation the whole structure of his ontology, cosmology, and ethics rests.

What does Wang Yang Ming mean when he speaks of nature? He discusses it in a somewhat fragmentary manner a number of times both in his discourses and in his letters, so that by bringing together the principal ideas involved we are able to get an approximate idea of what his conception includes. Luh Ch'en, one of his disciples, asked him the question, "Are the feelings of commiseration, shame, dislike, modesty, complaisance, approval, and disapproval to be considered nature manifesting virtue?" To this Wang Yang Ming replied: "There is only one nature and no other. Referring to its form and substance, it is Heaven; considered as ruler or lord, it is Shang-ti (God); viewed as functioning, it is fate; as given to men, it is disposition; and as controlling the person, it is mind; manifested by mind, it is called filial piety when it meets parents, and loyalty when it meets the prince. Proceeding from this on, it is inexhaustible, but it is all one nature. Man should use his energy on his nature. If he is able to understand the connotation of the word 'nature,' he will be able to distinguish ten thousand principles."⁵ A careful perusal of this makes it evident that this subtle something which Wang designates "nature" is so profound, so rich, so all-inclusive, that viewed as a whole the absolutist would probably greet it as his old friend the absolute, even though it be in Chinese garb. At another time Wang Yang Ming said: "Heaven and earth are one structure with me; spirits

⁵ *Ibid.*, Book 1, p. 26.

and gods are in one all-pervading unity with me.”⁶ It is, under such circumstances, reasonable to suppose that the discussions of nature by men of the past would be various. “There were those,” he said, “that discussed it from the point of its underlying substance; there were those that based their discussions on its manifestations; there were those that proceeded from its source; there were those that proceeded from the point of its defects and corruptions. Taking it all together, they all referred to this one nature, but there were degrees of depth in what they saw.”⁷

Thus far, however, the discussion emphasizes the profundity, abstruseness, comprehensiveness, and wealth of manifestation of nature in a very general way, but fails to point out accurately its fundamental character. Intelligence appears to be of prime importance. But is it really so, or is it perhaps only a by-product, while mechanism is basal? Wang does not fail to elucidate this point. “There is one nature,” he asserts, “and that is all. Charity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom are *ab initio* characteristic of it; quick apprehension, clear discrimination, far-reaching intelligence, and all-embracing knowledge are native to it. Pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy are the feelings of this nature.”⁸ Of its qualities of character, benevolence, which the sages have designated as the highest virtue, is the principle of continuous creating and growth. This principle is boundless in extent and everywhere present, but in its process and manifestation it advances gradually.⁹

However, it was in men’s mind that he primarily was interested. “My own nature is sufficient,”¹⁰ he said when he came to a state of realization. If nature at large be designated as the macrocosm, then human nature is the micro-

⁶ *Ibid.*, Book 2, p. 26.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Book 2, p. 31.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Book 3, p. 20.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Book 1, p. 37.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Biography, p. 8.

cosm, and for him human nature was the human mind. He was taking recreation at Nan Ch'en when one of his friends pointed to the flowers and trees on a cliff and said, "You say that there is nothing under heaven outside the mind. What relation to my mind have these flowers and trees on the high mountain, which blossom and drop of themselves?" Wang replied: "When you cease regarding these flowers, they become quiet with your mind. When you see them, their colors at once become clear. From this you can know that these flowers are not external to your mind."¹¹ This is undisguised idealism in which the microcosm creates as truly as the macrocosm. In the great all-pervading unity the most differentiated, highly specialized portion is the human mind. It manifests the only creative activity that men can really know. It is self-sufficient and embraces the universe. He said again and again that the mind of man is *ab initio* law, that it is the embodiment of the principles of Heaven. Thus its very essence is natural law, though not in any partial, superficial sense. There are no other principles operative anywhere, for the mind is so all-embracing that it has no within and without.¹²

Chiu Ch'uan had great difficulty in comprehending Wang's explanation of things, for from his common-sense point of view things were external. He questioned his teacher's position that a thing is identical with the presence of an idea. "Since things are external," he said, "how can they be one with the person, the mind, purpose and knowledge?" To which the teacher replied: "The ears, eyes, mouth, nose and four members constitute the person, or body; yet without the mind how can the person see, hear, speak, or move? On the other hand, if the mind wishes to see, hear, speak, or move, it is unable to do so without the use of ears, eyes, mouth, nose, and the four

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Book 2, p. 17.

¹² *Ibid.*, Book 2, p. 4.

members. From this it follows that if there is no mind, there is no person, or body, and that if there is no person, or body, there is no mind. If one refers only to the place it occupies, it is called person, or body; if one refers to the matter of control, it is called mind; if one refers to the activities of the mind, it is called purpose; if one refers to the intelligence of the purpose, it is called understanding; if one refers to the relations (implications) of the purpose, it is called things."¹³ From this it is evident that from Wang Yang Ming's point of view the volitional activity of the mind is true creative activity. In case the purpose is used with reference to the flowers growing on the side of the mountain precipice, then these flowers are a thing. Take away the purpose and *ipso facto* the flowers are no more. "When the purpose is used with reference to serving one's parents, then serving one's parents must be considered a thing. If it is used with reference to governing the people, then governing the people must be considered a thing. When the purpose is used in study, then study must be considered a thing; and when it is used in hearing litigation then this is a thing. Wherever the purpose is applied, there some definite thing is present. If there is a particular purpose, there is a particular thing present corresponding to it; and without this particular purpose the particular thing is lacking. Is not then," Wang asked, "a thing identical with the functioning of the purpose?"¹⁴

These, in brief, are the fundamental principles of his metaphysics. That he considered volitional activity as basal is evident, but will be more so as epistemological and ethical phases of his system are discussed.

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For Wang Yang Ming the epistemological problem centered primarily about the question of investigating things for the avowed purpose of extending knowledge to

¹³ *Ibid.*, Book 2, p. 2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Book 3, p. 58.

the utmost. Readers of the Chinese classics will recognize that this idea is mentioned in the Great Learning in the introductory text of Confucius. The difficulty lies not so much in the words themselves, for these seem clear enough, but in their correct interpretation. Like the oracles of Apollo at Delphi, a closer examination shows them to have an obscure, ingeniously ambiguous connotation. The question is: What does "investigation of things for the purpose of extending knowledge to the utmost" imply?

The philosopher Chu in his commentary on the fifth chapter of the Great Learning had said: "If we wish to carry our knowledge to the utmost we must investigate the principles of all things with which we come into contact."¹⁵ Since one of the necessary qualifications of a sage is just this, that he have extended his knowledge to the utmost, it was but natural that Wang, whose one ambition was to become a sage, should attempt to carry this out into practice. He chose as his point of departure the more manifest interpretation of the philosopher Chu, and tried to follow out the instructions therein given. He and his friend Ch'ien discussed the possibility of investigating everything under heaven. Pointing to a bamboo in front of the pavilion, he told Ch'ien to investigate it. Both day and night Ch'ien worked at the task and after three days he was physically and mentally so exhausted that he took sick. Wang feared that this was solely due to lack of strength and energy, and himself undertook to carry on the investigation. Though he worked day and night he, too, was unable to understand the principles of the bamboo, and after seven days became ill from over-exertion. Discouraged, both Ch'ien and he gave up. "We can become neither sages nor virtuous men," they said, "for we lack the great strength required to carry on the investigation of things."¹⁶

¹⁵ The Great Learning, Chap. 5.

¹⁶ The Philosophy of Wang Yang Ming, Book 2, p. 22.

Not until his enlightenment while at Lungch'ang did he realize the futility of attempting thus to investigate the things under heaven. There had been sages in the past, this he knew. From his own experience he saw that a thorough investigation of so commonplace a thing as a bamboo was not possible. How much less the investigation of all things! From now on his task was that of expounding a better way.

Relief was found in adopting the view that knowledge can be extended to the utmost only by a thorough devotion to nature. If the principles of things and affairs are to be exhaustively investigated, and thereby knowledge completed, it must be as a result of understanding and developing the mind. Not things without, but mind itself, offers the solution. The point of departure is the intuitive faculty or, in other words, nature itself. "This seeking for fundamental principles in things and affairs," said he, "is exemplified in seeking the principle of filial piety in one's parents. In case a person seeks the principle of filial piety in the parents, is it then in his own mind or is it in the person of the parents? In case it is in the person of the parents, is it then true that after the parents are dead, the mind lacks the principle of filial piety? If one sees a child fall into a well, there must be commiseration. Is this principle of commiseration in the child, or is it found in the intuitive faculty of the mind? Whether the individual is unable to follow the child and rescue it from the well or seizes it with his hand and saves it, this principle is involved. Is it then in the person of the child or is it rather in the intuitive faculty of the mind?"¹⁷ At another time he discussed this matter with Liang Jih Fu. "Tell me," he said, "what is meant by a thorough investigation of the principles of events and things?" Liang replied: "It would imply that in caring for one's parents one must thoroughly investigate

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Book, 3, p. 54.

the principles of filial piety, or in serving one's prince one must thoroughly investigate the principles of loyalty." Thereupon Wang said: "Are the principles of loyalty and filial piety to be investigated on the bodies of the prince and parents, or in one's own mind? If they are to be investigated in the mind, that would imply a thorough investigation of the principles of the mind."¹⁸

The problem of knowledge must be solved by depending upon the intuitive faculty and developing it. The development of knowledge refers to the development of intuitive knowledge, for the field of knowledge and the field of intuitive knowledge are conterminous. In so far as the intuitive faculty remains undeveloped, knowledge is undeveloped; and in so far as it is developed, the individual has knowledge of things and affairs. Intuitive knowledge does not come from seeing and hearing, though sense-perception is itself a function of the intuitive faculty. Apart from it there is no knowledge.¹⁹ It knows without cogitation, and is able to act without learning.²⁰ Wang praises it as being absolutely perfect. When Chiu Ch'uan asked him about the method of extending knowledge, he said: "The intuitive faculty is your standard. If your thoughts are right it is aware of it, and if they are wrong it also knows it. You must not blind it nor impose upon it, but must truly follow its lead. Whatever is good should be cherished; whatever is evil should be discarded. What confidence and joy there is in this! This is the true secret of the investigation of things and the real method of extending knowledge to the utmost. If you do not depend upon these true secrets, how will you engage in an investigation of things? I, too, have appreciated only in the past few years that it is to be thus explained. At first I doubted that a simple obedience to the intuitive faculty

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Book 1, p. 49.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Book 3, p. 42.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Book 3, p. 46.

would be sufficient. When I had very carefully examined it, I found that it has no deficiency whatsoever."²¹

The ethics of Wang Yang Ming's system is also firmly lodged in his exposition of the intuitive faculty, which he considers is the point of clearness that natural law attains in its moral aspects. For this reason intuitive knowledge of good is to be identified with moral principles. The intuitive faculty is tranquil; it is the equilibrium in which there is no stirring of the feelings. He who would understand the path of duty must exercise this faculty, for it alone marks clearly the path of duty. He who would choose the right and expel the evil must make use of it, for there is nothing in the categories of right and wrong that it does not naturally know. The highest good is simply the development of the intuitive faculty to the utmost. The finished product is a sage. "All-embracing and vast, he is like heaven; deep and active like a fountain, he is like the abyss."²² Serving his fellow-men and regulating his passion-nature, he is actuated by the desire to be a man who in his eager and unceasing pursuit of knowledge forgets his food. Forgetting his sorrow in the joy of the attainment of knowledge, he is never distressed. With reference to the principles of Heaven he is both omniscient and omnipotent.²³ Completely dominated by moral principles and wholly unhampered by passion, his integrity and moral worth are of the quality of the finest gold. The capacity may vary from man to man, but the quality is always of the highest and purest type.²⁴

A deaf and dumb man, Yang Mao by name, visited Wang Yang Ming, who conferred with him by means of writing. The ensuing conversation, which may well serve

²¹ *Ibid.*, Book 2, pp. 4 and 5.

²² *Doctrine of the Mean*, Chap. 31, § 3.

²³ *Philosophy of Wang Yang Ming*, Book 2, p. 8.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Book 1, pp. 40f.

to exemplify his method of dealing with the ethical problem, was as follows:²⁸

Wang Yang Ming said: "You are unable to speak or discuss either that which is right or that which is wrong. You cannot hear that which is right nor that which is wrong. Is your mind still able to distinguish right from wrong?"

Mao replied: "I know right and wrong."

"In that case," said Wang, "though your mouth is different from that of other men, and your ears are not like other men's ears, yet your mind is like that of other men."

Mao replied in the affirmative by nodding his head and thanking with his hands.

"In man," wrote Wang, "the mind alone is important. If it cherishes the principles of Heaven, it is the mind of sages and virtuous men. In that case, though the mouth cannot speak and the ears cannot hear, it is only sageness and virtue that cannot speak or hear. If on the other hand the mind does not cherish the principles of Heaven, it is the mind of birds and animals. Though under such circumstances there were the power of speech and audition, yet it would be merely an instance of a speaking and hearing bird or animal."

Mao struck his breast and pointed toward heaven.

Wang said: "Toward your parents you should exhaust the filial piety of your mind; toward your elder brother, its respectfulness; toward your village clan, your neighbors, your kindred and your relatives, its complaisance, harmony, respectfulness, and docility. When you see others prosperous, you should not covet their wealth and advantage. Within yourself you should practice that which is right and not that which is wrong. It is really not necessary that you should hear it when others say that you are

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Book 4, pp. 83 and 84.

right, nor do you need to hear it when they speak of your mistakes."

Mao nodded his head and bowed in thanks.

"Since you are unable to discuss or hear right or wrong, you are saved the necessity of making distinctions between a great deal of idle, useless right and wrong. The discussion of truth and error begets truth and error and brings forth trouble and vexation. By hearing good and evil one adds to one's right and wrong and to one's troubles. Since you cannot speak or hear, you are spared a good deal of useless good and evil, as well as much trouble and vexation. You are much more cheerful, happy, and self-possessed than others."

Mao struck his breast, pointed toward heaven, and replaced his feet on the ground.

Thereupon Wang said: "My instruction to you to-day is that it is only necessary to act in accordance with your mind and not necessary to speak; that it is only necessary that you comply with your mind and not necessary to hear."

Mao prostrated himself, saluted, and departed.

In its practical aspects, Wang's ethical system places special emphasis upon action as the *sine qua non* of moral progress. Knowledge and action, theory and practice, are so interrelated that the former does not exist without the latter. Nature can be developed only as the individual directly applies what he knows. In case he fails to act, the knowledge that he supposes himself to have has not really been acquired. Here Wang is not far from pragmatism, which urges that the truth of an idea consists in its verifiability. As Paul S. Reinsch has stated in *Intellectual and Political Currents in the Far East* (page 138), this phase of his philosophy has doubtless had a profound influence upon students in Japan and China.

The absolute moral perfection of the intuitive faculty presented a serious problem to some of Wang's disciples.

That the main divisions of the doctrine and the general direction of the path of duty could be readily understood in this way seemed clear to them; but with regard to changeable sections and paragraphs and the details of conduct under changing circumstances, they felt considerable apprehension. Is the intuitive faculty really able to mediate reliable knowledge in such cases, or is it necessary for a person to seek earnestly for what is right and wrong in things themselves? Is knowledge of right and wrong innate, or is it acquired from experience? In a letter to his teacher, Ku Tang Ch'iao urges that when one reaches the facts that Shun married without informing his parents,²⁶ that Wu put troops into the field before he buried his father, that the son endures the small stick but evades the large one, that he cuts flesh from his thigh to feed his ill parent, that he erects a straw hut beside the grave of his parent, or any similar thing, then the knowledge mediated by the intuitive faculty is inadequate and a person must depend upon his experience.²⁷ Wang considered this position incorrect, for he felt that the intuitive faculty has the same relation to the details of right and wrong and to changing circumstances as compasses and squares have to squares and circles, and measures to length and breadth. "The changes in circumstances relative to details," he said, "cannot be determined beforehand, just as the size of the square or the circle, and length and breadth, cannot be perfectly estimated. But when compasses and squares have been set, there can be no deception about the size of the square or the circle, and when rule and measure have been fixed there can be no deception about length or shortness. When the intuitive faculty has been completely developed there can be no deception regarding its application to changing details. As for Shun's marrying without tell-

²⁶ Shun and Wu were two famous emperors of ancient China.

²⁷ Philosophy of Wang Yang Ming, Book 3, p. 61.

ing his parents, was there any one previous to his time who served as an example of such a deed? In what historical and mythological document did he find a precedent, or of what individual did he make inquiry? Or did he rather make use of the intuitive faculty to consider what should be done, and there being no other way act thus?"²⁸ What is true in this instance Wang taught as true in all others. From his point of view the intuitive faculty is quite competent to grapple with any moral problem whatsoever.

Last, but not least, is the problem of evil. No system of philosophy is complete without having attempted a solution for this perennial problem, and more than one system has suffered shipwreck in the attempt. Wang also was unable to disregard it. Hsieh K'an, one of his favorite disciples, was pulling grass out from among the flowers. "How difficult it is," he said, "to cultivate the good in Heaven and on earth, and how hard it is to get rid of the evil!" Wang said, "You should neither cultivate the good nor expel the evil." A little later he continued, "This way of viewing good and evil has its source in the body and thus is open to mistakes." As Hsieh K'an was not able to comprehend, he added: "The purpose of Heaven and earth in bringing forth is even as in the instance of flowers and grass. In what does it distinguish between good and evil? If you, my disciple, take pleasure in seeing the flowers, then you will consider flowers good and grass bad. If you wish to use the grass you will, in turn, consider the grass good." Hsieh K'an replied, "In that case there is neither good nor evil, is there?" Wang answered, "The tranquility of the principles of Heaven is a state in which there is neither good nor evil, while the stirring of the passion-nature is a state in which there is both good and evil."²⁹

For him there was only one real evil, and that consisted

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Book 3, pp. 61f.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Book 1, pp. 42f.

in exceeding or failing to realize nature. All other distinctions between good and evil seemed to him to savor of arbitrariness and superficiality. The mind is by nature clear and bright and the intuitive faculty, if given free play, will develop to the utmost. Selfish desire and ceremoniousness are things that obscure it and obstruct its smooth functioning. If the mind in its natural condition is like a clear bright mirror, then selfish desires and deeds are the dust and spots that darken it and hinder it from reflecting clearly. The mind of the sage allows no obscuration to take place, but the mind of the ordinary man is subject to all the evils that inhere in the selfish striving for gain and fame.³⁰

As a remedy for evil he advocated that all obscuration be removed from the mind and every obstruction be taken away, so that it can function normally. To this end the determination must be fixed and the purpose made sincere. The mind must continually cherish the principles of Heaven, for so long as it does this it is proceeding along the line of nature. If the individual fails at the point of making and keeping his purpose sincere, no amount of striving to understand so-called external things will keep the evil from sprouting, for this striving is itself a token of selfishness. By removing all obscuration and every obstruction of selfishness, passion, pride and ceremoniousness from the intuitive faculty, it is given perfect freedom to develop naturally and normally. The teacher spoke to his disciples saying, "Sirs, in your task of developing the mind, you must not in the least hinder or force the development. The student cannot leap over into the principles of the sage. Rising, falling, advancing, receding, are naturally the order of the task."³¹ However, in all this the determi-

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Book 4, p. 5.

³¹ *Ibid.*, Book 2, p. 12.

nation must be fixed and the purpose sincere.³² There must be absolute devotion to the intuitive faculty and unfailing loyalty to nature. "Without sincerity there can be nothing."³³

FREDERICK G. HENKE.

WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY, SALEM, OREGON.

³² *Ibid.*, Book 1, p. 56f.

³³ *Doctrine of the Mean*, Chap. 25, § 2.